# Aparthib bridges the gap and Sina's response

For the complete debate with materialists see this list

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An email received from Aparthib.

> **Quote:**

Below I am presenting an 8 point summary of the main points of the debate on the paranormal from the rationalist perspective. hope this would help to bridge the gap between proponents of paranormal and skeptics. Much of it may turn out to be matter of pure semantics.

1. The view that paranormal phenomena MIGHT exist or MIGHT have occurred, IS NOT debatable.

2. The following two views ARE debatable :

A. paranormal phenomena DO exist or must have occurred in a given instance of anecdotal claim.

OR,

B. Paranormal phenomena CAN NEVER occur, or that NONE of the anecdotal claims of paranormal occurrence ARE true.

2. Rationalists/Scientists take the general view of (1).
If proponents of paranormal also hold the general view (1), then there is no need or any point for a debate.

3. The debate can only ensue if Scientists took the view of 2-B or the paranormalists took the view 2-A.

4. Rationalists/Scientists only assert that anecdotal claims cannot be a reliable and objective basis of verifying the occurrence of paranormal in a given instance, regardless of the personal credibility of the anecdotist or their number. This view does not contradict view (1) and does not necessarily imply view 2-B

5. The view of 4 is demanded by science and TRUE skepticism. So view 4 cannot be a dogma, because science and skepticism itself does not contain any element of dogma.

6. Since by 4, anecdotes cannot be a scientific or rational criteria for the occurrence of paranormal, anyone claiming that a paranormal occurrence has taken place based on purely anecdotal claims cannot be a TRUE rationalist/skeptic.

7. If one takes the view that it is in principle not possible to verify the occurrence of paranormal by scientific observations, because paranormal by definition is beyond science (This is the view taken by Ali Sina), then one can only take the view (1) and say nothing more. To say that a paranormal HAS occurred in a given instance has to be totally based on personal faith, because if it is indeed beyond scientific means to verify its existence, then it does not make a logical sense to even assert that it HAS

occurred. A categorically affirmative/negative statement by defintion has to be objectively (i.e scientifically) verifianble in principle. If it is stated as a faith then it cannot be debated by rationalists, because a debate bewteen faith and reason is an oxymoron.

8. Ali Sina alleged that by dismissing paranormal events without examining the claims carefully, Scientists/Skeptics are proving to be dogmatic and pseudo-rationalists. His conclusion is based on the interpretation that Scientists/Skeptics are dismissing the paranormal "occurrences". But really Scientists/Skeptics dismiss "Anecodtal Claims", not "Paranormal Phenomena". This crucial difference is being ignored by Ali Sina despite repeated clarification. If Scientists/Skeptics accepted (opposite of dismiss) anecdotes as the conclusive proof for the *occurrence* of paranormal, then they would cease to be scientists and skeptics. In other words he will be questioning science and skepticism itself by questioning the scientists and skeptics who are just following the criteria of science and skepticism.

- Aparthib

Dear Aparthib,

Thank you for the clarification. The truth is however that although many of claims of paranormal are anecdotal and therefore it would be impossible for anyone to prove or disprove them not all such phenomena are anecdotal.

Last night a friend who is following our debate called and asked me to watch a TV documentary called Unsolved Mysteries. This documentary was about Energy Healing. The good thing about it was that it was not anecdotal. In one case a woman was blind and she recovered her eye sight. Her doctor was there to testify. In another case they showed a video tape of woman fully paralyzed with lugaric disease then she was talking and walking perfectly normal. The progression of her recovery was filmed and her doctor came to testify. Lugaric disease has no cure (Steven Hawking is affected by lugaric disease). They showed a doctor in Japan who measured the brain activity of a patient with tumor while she was being treated by the “psychic therapist”. He took the pictures of the brain and the tumor. The tumor shrank in eight minutes to 50% of its size without the healer touching the patient. In one other case, a man’s leg was so severely damaged that it had to be amputated. Her mother in her desperation called an energy therapist. The doctor was also interviewed. He said I thought this is absurd but since I did not see any way this could harm the patient I conceded, despite that I scheduled the amputation. The foot started moving in the first session and the patient recovered completely after a few months.

Now these stories for you are just anecdotes. I could be lying after all. However, it is not really difficult to verify all these claims by interviewing the doctors and seeing their medical records. The program is called Unsolved Mysteries and is shown in many televisions. One can contact the producer and get the phone numbers of these doctors who appeared in the documentary and verify their claim.

I actually forgot completely talking about energy therapy. This subject fascinates me. I heard of a man in Iran who teaches this therapy and desired to go there and learn it myself. Unfortunately I am not able to go to Iran for obvious reasons. I came to know about this Iranian man from a show in an Iranian L.A. based television. (NITV) A man who claimed he had learned the energy therapy from that guy in Iran made a reputation among that Iranians in North America. One interesting case was an American patient of him. This person showed his video tapes when he was in wheal chair and then how he regained first the feeling of his toes and then started moving his legs. When he appeared in the show he was walking with the help of crutches.

The producer of the show, who is not a nonsense woman, said before inviting this man on her show she wanted to test him first. So she called him to work on her 90 year old mother and she filmed it. Her mother had 101 diseases and constantly in pain. After several sessions all pains were gone and she was walking and looked perfectly healthy. One could even see her complexion had changed and she was full of life. She could not hold her hand steady. But after a few sessions she proudly kept her hand in front of the camera with no shake at all. I learned that she died one year later. The producer of the show said that her mother lived the last year of her life with no pains.

My request from those who want to be known as rationalists and skeptics is please stop this haughty and sneering attitude of we know everything and you are credulous. Be humble. We humans have not yet discovered many mysteries of this universe. Don’t let people like James Randi or Shermer pull wool over your eyes. If you are skeptic act like one. If the word spirit offends your sensibility don’t use it, but investigate the energy field that all humans, animals and plants possess. Acupuncture works. This is not just anecdote. The acupuncturists say they manipulate the energy field or qi. Find out how and why it works. Acupuncture is not just a placebo. It works even on animals. These are not fairy tales and anecdotes. These are facts that can be tested and measured scientifically. Denying these facts doesn’t make you intellectuals. It makes you bigots. Horse laugher is not the distinction of scientific people. It is the behavior of stupid people.

Paranormal of course covers a lot of field. Some of that are really beyond science and hence not relevant to scientific scrutiny. Like for example the dreams coming true. This is a personal experience. Some of them however are very much measurable scientifically. The energy therapy is one of them. The responsible thing for the scientific community is to study the latter cases. Verify them and regulate them.

Unfortunately as long as these faculties are dismissed, they can’t be studied and hence regulation is impossible. So these fields are left open to charlatans and mentalists who with

no qualification or ability fool people to make a buck.

Many years ago naturotherapy was unregulated. Anyone could pick up an herbal book and prescribe natural remedies. Now you have to be a physician to practice naturotherapy and it takes you seven years to qualify. The same thing should be done for energy therapy. There are of course more charlatans in this unregulated industry than the real ones. Of course they get some results but those results are placebo effects, i.e. internally induced healings. Now acupuncture and some other holistic medicines are taught in a few universities and the practitioners are required to be licensed. The Vancouver General Hospital is a very prestigious hospital in North America and has a department dedicated to holistic medicine, including acupuncture. There was of course a great resistance to that until the burden of proof became so overwhelming that it had to be taken seriously.

The same steps should be taken for energy therapy. Energy therapy works. It does not matter how it works and why it works. The point is that it works. If it works it must be taken seriously. Facts must be separated from fiction and the charlatans weeded out.

Thanks again for writing,

Ali Sina